



BIOGRAPHY

Marj NejdI

BIRTHPLACE

Marj Kopacek NejdI was born in 1936 in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. She now lives in Ely, Iowa.

CHILDHOOD

Ms. NejdI, a first-generation Czech-American, had the opportunity to grow up surrounded by folk art artifacts. She learned egg decorating from her uncle when she was a child. Her uncle and her mother set dyes out and created decorated eggs. Ms. NejdI assumed that everyone did this. She also saw the delicate art of bobbin lace work practiced by family members.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Ms. NejdI attended the Chicago Art Institute and studied commercial art.

POSITION

Ms. NejdI teaches classes in Czechoslovakian egg decorating at a Czech school in Cedar Rapids, and at festivals and other venues. She is a master artist for folk arts apprenticeships in Iowa and South Dakota, and won the 1992 Iowa Cultural Heritage Fellowship.

INSPIRATION/INFLUENCE

Her family members, and being surrounded by decorative arts in her home, influenced Marj NejdI as an artist. In the 1970's, she was "volunteered" to demonstrate egg art, and she is very thankful that she got started that way. That event has influenced her artistic life ever since, she says. She finds inspiration in the whole area of folk art, and in flowers, in lace, and in costumes. She hopes that students will be inspired to create their own eggs in this "magic art, this fun art."

ART FORM

Ms. NejdI creates wax-resist Czechoslovakian decorated eggs, employing a variety of traditional techniques. Some of the materials required are melted beeswax, crayon, dye, and flame from a candle.

WEB SITE

Slavic egg decorating:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egg_decorating_in_Slavic_culture

ARTWORK DISPLAYED

Prior to the Iowa floods of 2008, Ms. NejdI was represented in the collection of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. When the museum is repaired and restored, her work will be displayed there again.

An egg Ms. NejdI created, along with eggs from the other states, will be displayed at the White House in Washington, D.C. during the Easter season.